

CLAIMS

1. A networked commercial interaction management method, comprising the steps of:

distributing information bundles from different ones of a first plurality of different networked users to different ones of a second plurality of different network users according to a machine-readable format that includes values for a plurality of content attribute descriptors, and

deriving traffic statistics for the step of distributing based on values for the content attribute descriptors.

2. The method of claim 1 further including the step of converting the traffic statistics into billing amounts.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the step of converting converts traffic to different destinations to different billing amounts.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein the step of converting converts traffic to billing amounts for events requested by programmed bundle processing logic between the different users.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of converting converts traffic to billing amounts for operations that are independent of human interaction.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of deriving derives statistics about the presentation of offer bundles and acceptance rates for these offer bundles.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of deriving derives statistics about the types of bundles transferred and information profiles for users involved in the transfers.

8. The method of claim 1 further including the step of transferring the statistics to buy-side users.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of deriving operates substantially continuously in near-real time.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the bundles distributed in the step of distributing include a data element reference and meta data describing the data element, and wherein each data element remains resident on a node of a data owner in a network.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of deriving derives statistics about transfers between pairs of users that are authorized to communicate with each other, but where communication between the pairs is not permitted.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of deriving derives statistics about a ticker symbol field.

13. A networked system for managing commercial interactions, comprising:
a bundle-passing interface between a plurality of networked users and including distribution logic including a distribution control input responsive to machine-readable information in the bundles, and
a statistics collection engine including a control input responsive to machine-readable information in the bundles.

14. A networked system for managing commercial interactions, comprising:
means for distributing information bundles from different ones of a first plurality of different networked users to different ones of a second plurality of different network users according to a machine-readable format that includes values for a plurality of content attribute descriptors, and

means for deriving traffic statistics for the step of distributing based on values for the content attribute descriptors.

15. A networked commercial interaction management method, comprising the steps of:

negotiating different levels of trusted relationships between different ones of a first plurality of different networked users and different ones of a second plurality of different network users, and

distributing information bundles from the different ones of the first plurality of different networked users to the different ones of the second plurality of different network users according to the different levels of trusted relationships.

16. The method of claim 15 further including the step of looking up one of the second plurality of users by one of the first plurality of users using a directory look-up utility.

17. The method of claim 15 wherein the step of negotiating includes the exchange of electronic business cards.

18. The method of claim 15 wherein the step of distributing distributes different versions of a first bundle to different users based on their different levels of trusted relationships with a sender of the first bundle.

19. The method of claim 15 wherein the step of distributing involves different levels of alerting of recipients of the bundles, and wherein selection of the different levels of alerting is based on the recipients' different levels of trusted relationships with senders of the first bundle.

20. The method of claim 15 further including a step of providing feedback information to senders of particular bundles from recipients of the particular bundles about the particular bundles received, and wherein amounts of the feedback information depend on the levels of trusted relationships between the sender and recipients.

21. The method of claim 15 further including the step of distributing marketing messages between the networked users before the step of negotiating.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein the marketing messages include machine-readable transaction-type information expressing the types of transactions a sending user is capable of providing.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein the machine readable transaction-type information includes market sector information.

24. The method of claim 15 further including the step of publishing profiles accessible over the network that include machine-readable transaction-type information expressing the types of transactions a publishing user is capable of providing.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein the machine readable transaction-type information includes market sector information.

26. A networked system for managing commercial interactions, comprising:
an invitation passing interface operative to transmit invitations to a plurality of networked users,

relationship status storage for storing the status of a relationship between users and responsive to a relationship status event to access the storage, and

a bundle passing interface operative to transmitting bundles to a plurality of the networked users and having an input responsive to the relationship status storage.

27. A networked system for managing commercial interactions, comprising:
means for negotiating different levels of trusted relationships between different ones of a first plurality of different networked users and different ones of a second plurality of different network users, and

means for distributing information bundles from the different ones of the first plurality of different networked users to the different ones of the second plurality of different network users according to the different levels of trusted relationships.

28. A networked commercial interaction management method, comprising the steps of:

exchanging machine-readable identifying information between a plurality of different networked users, and

selecting information bundles to receive based on the machine readable identifying information communicated in the step of communicating, from different ones of the users in a same machine-readable format, wherein the machine-readable format includes values for a plurality of information fields.

29. The method of claim 28 wherein the step of communicating machine-readable identifying information includes the step of exchanging electronic business cards that each include identifying information.

30. The method of claim 28 wherein the step of selecting bundles includes the step of evaluating security information to determine whether a bundle can be selected.

31. The method of claim 28 wherein the machine-readable format includes a traded security identifier field, an annotation field, and a sender identification field as the information fields.

32. The method of claim 28 wherein the machine-readable format includes an organizational affiliation identification field, an annotation field, and a sender identification field as the information fields.

33. The method of claim 28 wherein the information bundles include textual information bundles, graphical information bundles, and audio information bundles.

34. The method of claim 28 further including the step of notifying a potential accessor of the availability of data based at least in part on the machine-readable identification information.

35. The method of claim 34 wherein the step of defining an alert includes selecting a remote notification method.

36. The method of claim 28 wherein the step of selecting selects bundles in near-real time.

37. The method of claim 28 further including the step of establishing communication with a sender of a first of the bundles received in the step of receiving relating to the content of the first of the bundles.

38. The method of claim 37 wherein the step of responding takes place in response to user actuation of a control associated with the first bundle.

39. The method of claim 37 wherein the step of responding takes place in response to user actuation of a control proximate a display area for the first bundle.

40. The method of claim 37 wherein the step of responding includes near-real-time, two-way communication.

41. The method of claim 37 wherein the step of responding includes requesting peer-to-peer transfer of an item referenced in the first bundle.

42. The method of claim 28 wherein the step of communicating machine-readable identifying information includes the step of publishing a profile including values for the plurality of information fields.

43. The method of claim 42 wherein the profile includes a set of decision-making rules that contain the accessor's criteria for notification, relevance, download, and routing of bundle data.

44. The method of claim 28 wherein the step of communicating a profile is responsive to a step of defining a limited distribution record specifying the extent of distribution of some or all of the profile.

45. The method of claim 44 further including the step of selecting a user to communicate with, from a directory of authorized users.

46. A networked system for managing commercial interactions, comprising:
an invitation-passing interface between a plurality of networked users, for passing invitations between users that include machine-readable identifying information including values for a plurality of information fields,
a bundle-passing interface operative to transmitting bundles to the plurality of networked users, and
filtering logic responsive to the invitation-passing interface and to the bundle passing-interface and operative to select information bundles to receive from the bundle-passing interface based on the machine readable identifying information received from

the invitation-passing interface from different ones of the users in a same machine-readable format.

47. A networked system for managing commercial interactions, comprising:
means for exchanging machine-readable identifying information between a plurality of different networked users, and
means for selecting information bundles to receive based on the machine readable identifying information communicated by the means for communicating, from different ones of the users in a same machine-readable format, wherein the machine-readable format includes values for a plurality of information fields.

48. A networked system for managing commercial interactions, comprising:
a network service for distributing information bundles between nodes of a network,
data stores at the nodes of the network, wherein the data stores include areas for data bundles and security information identifying entitled accessors associated with each of the data bundles, and
a security enforcement system, operative to access the security information and permit only authorized accessors to access data bundles from other nodes based on the security information.

49. The apparatus of claim 48 further including an application component having an interface to a stand-alone software application and an interface to the programming interface of the bundle processing logic.

50. The apparatus of claim 48 further including peer-to-peer transfer logic to enable peer-to-peer access to data elements referenced in the bundles.

51. The apparatus of claim 48 further including invitation reception logic for receiving invitations and relationship establishment logic to establishing a relationships between owners and accessors.

52. The apparatus of claim 48 further directory logic responsive to a list of networked users.

53. The apparatus of claim 48 wherein a format for the security information allows for organization identifiers to be included in the security information.

54. The apparatus of claim 48 further including nesting logic to nest at least some of the bundles in superbundles that include additional information, wherein each bundle includes security information identifying entitled accessors of the data, and wherein only accessors with entitlements to both a bundle and its superbundle can see both the bundle and the superbundle.

55. The apparatus of claim 48 wherein the bundle and the superbundle have different owners at different nodes and wherein the network service distributes the bundle and the superbundle from the different nodes.

56. The apparatus of claim 48 further including a version identifying signals generator operative to issue version identifying signals to the different nodes of the network.

57. A networked system for managing commercial interactions, comprising:
means for distributing information bundles between nodes of a network,
means for storing data bundles and security information identifying entitled accessors associated with each of the data bundles data stores at the nodes of the network,
and

means for accessing the security information and permitting only authorized accessors to access data bundles from other nodes based on the security information.

58. A networked commercial interaction management method, comprising the steps of:

distributing information bundles between nodes of a network,
storing data bundles and security information identifying entitled accessors
associated with each of the data bundles data stores at the nodes of the network, and
accessing the security information and permitting only authorized accessors to
access data bundles from other nodes based on the security information.